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WHY INDIA LIVES

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IMPORTANT

Kindly note that this is a Double Number for the two months,—October and November 1970.

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INTRODUCTION

INDIA's children must know themselves,—must have a memory of what India has thought and felt and endeavoured to achieve at certain periods in her history. In a profound sense, as Plato and Indian sages have taught, knowledge is memory.

Indian literature, philosophies and religions reflect the ideals of ancient India. But our schools and colleges and universities do little to develop the culture-consciousness of India. I have heard several young men tell me :—"These stories and songs and thought-systems of the past,—are not, many of them, myths of a dream-land?" Many of the striking incidents in the lives of the great heroes of our history are regarded, I know, by not a few of those who would follow critical, historical methods, as fictitious.

I would ask young men to remember that the truth of poetry or imagination has a value as great as, if not greater than, the truth of facts. What some critics would reject as "dreamland" has been a part of the life of the great millions of India. The "dreamland" enshrines India's witness through the ages. It must not be forgotten that India's culture, as reflected in Indian literature and art and religion, is a reflection of India's life and civilisation.

I believe in the value of Indian ideals for the modern world. There is a muddle somewhere in our modern life,—something wrong with our

civilisation. "Light, more light!" said Goethe on his death-bed. And each expiring generation has cried the pathetic cry :—"Light, more light!" The continuous accumulation of materials in modern science, philosophy and sociology has but disclosed the fact that great problems of thought, conduct and life remain unsolved. And I am one of those who believe that the "light, more light," the larger light we need, will travel again from the ancient pathways of the East. Indian Ideals can do much to help the modern world.

We talk of Bharata. That sacred word has many meanings in the ancient books. One of them I may refer to here. Bharata is a name given to Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge. And knowledge is freedom. For with knowledge comes self-reliance. If young men would but know India,—her genius, her culture, her ideals! It were well for us of India to remember something of our past and appreciate the values of Aryan civilisation. I plead in these pages for a right understanding of the spirit of Indian culture and the soul of Indian civilisation.

It is painfully true that the current system of education has not helped us to recognise and appreciate Indian culture. Several of those who pass University examinations think of the jobs they might have in Government departments rather than of the values of nation-service. Industrial culture of the West interests many, as well it may. But how many are interested, also, in Indian culture or realise how much it may enrich the thought and life of the world? And Indian culture related itself to a refined type of civilisation.

In one of his books, the Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, develops a theory of life in terms of "self" and "anti-self." It may not be untrue to facts, I think, to speak of "self" and "other-self." And these should, in the life of individuals and nations, be interlinked with each other. India's self is culture realised in and through religion, morality, art, literature : her other-self is civilisation realised in and through politics, science, agriculture, industry. India was great, in the long ago, when she realised the unity of these two,—culture and civilisation. India fell in the day when many of her men of culture developed a theory of asceticism and, separating themselves from life, stood outside the movement of civilisation, leaving the country to its sad fate.

How to secure an effective union of culture and civilisation is, to my mind, the real problem before us. A note common to Indian culture and Indian civilisation, as I understand them, is fellowship with humanity. In the days of her greatness,—and even in the later period of her decline,—India did not fail to bear witness to a spiritual synthesis of life, a fellowship with man, a yearning for the Universal. Her literature, from the Vedic age to that of Rabindranath Tagore, has sung in rapturous strains of the "One whom the sages call by many names,"—the One who binds races and religions into one brotherhood. The idea of fellowship with man should be of value to modern civilisation.

In these pages, then, I plead for freedom through fellowship with humanity. Hate, a German General said, was man's original sin.

I believe it has not been India's original sin. India has believed from the beginning of her days in the ideal spiritual. And can't we, I have often asked myself, uproot this original sin by the ideal which India has adored as the eternal force of evolution?

In an Italian play, we read of a crazy carpenter. He has made a "boat of death." It is a row boat : it carries men out into the midstream : it drowns them quite successfully! Such a "boat of death," I am convinced, is the imperialism or the nation-cult which lacks love for humanity. It develops an efficiency successful only in carrying a nation out into the midstream and drowning its higher life. Will India, too, construct a "boat of death" for herself? Or will she to her own self prove true and solve the problem of freedom for herself,—and the world?

Freedom, in the West, has been confounded with greatness. True freedom is the way of service. To that nation belongs freedom which serves civilisation, serves humanity. Power and friction, power and violence go together. Change the motive of power into one of service, and you will solve the problem of freedom. Communism has not solved it : it believes in the supremacy of physical force. The problem may be solved by the spirit of India, if but the world would understand it.

The noblest ideal uttered by India's teachers is the ideal of non-violence. All humanity,—yea, all sentient life,—is sacred. A political application of this great spiritual principle is necessarily limited. But even in its limited scope

the duty imposed upon us is clear. A violence-school, if it becomes popular, will, I believe, put back the clock of our progress,—will plunge the country into chaos, and may start a revolution redder than any revolution recorded in history.* I know feelings at this hour are running high. Therefore, I plead with young men to turn from thoughts of hate and strife to the great message of India. Therefore, I ask them in all humility to recover a memory of their race-ideals and refuse to part with the rich spiritual heritage of the India of the Aryan age.

I read, some years ago, a suggestive little story of a young French soldier who fought against the Germans in the world-war. His parents asked him not to fight for France; he, they said, was their only son and would surely die on the battle-field. The young man was dauntless. He went forth to fight for France. He was wounded : he was taken to the hospital. Asked why he fought for France, he spoke with his dying breath the beautiful words :—"France! She is singing to me."

To young men agitated today, I fain would say :—Children of the Mother! India is singing to you. Floating down the stream of centuries, the Song of her Sages and Heroes may yet be heard. She is singing still. Will you take up the Song? Will you publish it to the world? The Ancient Wisdom may yet be the healing of the nations.

T. L. VASWANI

* Though this " Introduction " was written in 1922, it is equally significant for the times through which we are passing today.

—*Editor*

THE VISION OF INDIA

I look up to the young men of today as the builders of a new India. And what builds is not passion, not ignorance, but the power of thought, a vision of the ideal. "Out of thought," as an Upanishad says, "is born the universe." And the young must learn to understand and appreciate the values of Indian thought, Indian culture, Indian civilisation, if they would evolve a new India. They must find India in their minds and hearts, if they would vindicate her claims before the world. Our history, our literature, our music and art, our philosophy, our social and religious ideals,—these, to my mind, are among the elements of our national culture. They have a value for India's children. They have a value, also, for the world.

Not many, even in India, seem to realise the value of Indian ideals for civilisation and humanity. A good many in the West still indulge in the comfortable illusion that Indians are not civilised enough! Very few, even among thinkers of European reputation, understand that Indian culture has a value as great as, if not greater than, the Mediterranean culture, and that it is essential to humanity for the building up of a new civilisation.

The culture of India, as I understand it, is inspired by a vision human, a vision universal,—a vision of the one *Atman* in all. So we read in an Upanishad :—"Even as a grain of rice or the

smallest granule of millet, so is the golden Purusha in my heart. Even as a smokeless light, It is greater than the sky, greater than all existing things. That Self is my Self. On passing away from hence, I shall obtain that Self. And, verily, whosoever has this faith,—for him there is no uncertainty." This culture was human in its outlook, and it was essentially related to the building up of race-life.

How foolish the current notion that Indians merely dreamt and philosophised! They did dream : and are men better than brutes if they will not dream the dream of the Good, the True, the Beautiful? They did philosophise : and what intelligent man but must have a philosophy, a view-point, an attitude, a way of looking at the world? Your attitude to the universe determines your conduct, your life. Our Indian ancestors dreamt, but were not mere dreamers. They philosophised, but were not mere philosophers. They had a rich, human outlook upon life. And the *Arya dharma* was not a dead religion, a creed. It was a socio-economic synthesis.

India built a constructive civilisation. India related culture to the problems of social and national life. The one injunction laid by the Guru upon his disciples entering into life was :—"See that the thread of your race is not broken!" The thread of the race,—there you have an idea of one aspect of the Guru's teaching,—one aspect of Aryan culture.

The thread of the race must not be broken! Hence the necessity of keeping the body healthy

and strong. The physical is a part of the moral, the mental, the spiritual. The body belongs to your Self. And one great principle of national life is to check physical degeneration and prevent sins against the body. The old Indian aspiration was not simply for things of the Spirit but also for those of the body. It was an aspiration for the well-being of the nation. Listen to this beautiful prayer of the *Rig Veda* :—"Harm us not, Rudra, in our seed and progeny! Harm us not in the living!" Here is another from the same scripture :—"May we see for a hundred years, live for a hundred years, hear, speak, be rich,—yea, more than hundred years!" Not a selfish prayer this. For it is not an individual,—it is "we," the community, the race, the soul of the nation,—that asks for riches, for unimpaired physical faculties, for the well-being of the People. So in another scripture of India, we read :—"Give me faith, memory, wisdom, learning,—but also prosperity, strength, long life, vigour, health." There you have the prayer of men who related culture to national life.

They understood that home-life must be healthy, if the race-life was to be rich and strong. So in the books, emphasis is put on home-life. Today the hotel is displacing the home. But still in India the great masses feel something of the sanctity of home. There can be, I think, no greater calamity for a civilisation than when its homes are broken up or become loveless.

Indian lawgivers recognised the place of woman in the programme of life. And if home-life is to become again the strength of our civilisation,

it is necessary for us to have a new reverence for woman. The idea must grow that her emotions, her intuitions, her mysticism of sympathy will nourish the moral, social and political life of the age. The Aryan woman has been the great guardian of the Aryan Ideal : and we need, at this hour, her help and inspiration in the re-moulding of our national life. Was it without reason that marriage in India was regarded a sacrament? India worshipped Woman, the Mother. And our national *mantra*, *Bande mataram*, reflects the spirit of reverence for Woman, the Mother.

Conduct (*neeti*), in ancient India, was interpreted as subordination of the individual to a World-Will. Freedom was interpreted in terms of the spiritual, the *Atman*. Moral values of life were regarded as the shaping power of social, economic and political life. Progress was not confounded with efficiency; and *dharma* restrained the will-to-power and the will-to-pleasure.

This *dharma*, as Hindu and Buddhist Books tell us again and again, was interpreted to mean the Eternal Law above the state. Faith in such a Law gave many, in the past, the strength to suffer for truth and righteousness. Indian history, from the age of Arjuna down to that of the Sikh Gurus and the liberators of Maharashtra, is a record rich in examples of spiritual heroism.

Faith in the Great Law, also, made the Indian reverent of humanity. Indian scholars were not ashamed to learn astronomy at the feet of the Greeks. Indian monks, with a longing to help other nations, passed over high mountains and

great plains and storm-swept rivers to carry to Japan and China the message of the Buddha and the sages. The Indian had room in his heart for humanity. India's heroes saw the Imperishable in the heart of toil and struggle. India's teachers and poets sang not songs of war and hate and strife but the Great Word :—

The Eternal is one :
He hath no caste!

India's gift to the nations is not big machines, not the paraphernalia of comfort-civilisation, but vision of the One-in-all, the vision that makes us sons of the Spirit. The proud imperialisms, which, with shouts of efficiency and race-superiority, sit heavily upon the life of the East, are blind to the vision and the dream of India. Nor do they remember that he whose name is worshipped by the West,—Jesus of Nazareth,—was an Oriental and a brother of the peoples despised by the Christian West.

The terrible tragedy of Europe today lies in its lack of a vision of humanity. In song and story, the message speaks to India's children :— "There is but One; and in His heart is no hate." I have heard peasants and common servants sing songs charged with this spiritual culture. India never developed imperialistic culture. India never developed imperialistic ambitions. Our national traditions never encouraged a cult of pride and power. And if, today, we let hate and passion dominate our national life, we shall not, I humbly submit, prove ourselves worthy of our great past. Nor shall we, let me add, be

able to achieve much. In the creative processes of evolution or revolution, hate has no place. What binds and builds is the vision human, the vision universal.

To this vision India has borne witness through the ages. This vision *is* India. Therefore, though India, today, is poor and seems so weak, India's earth is to me a *punya bhumi*. Therefore, I hold it a high privilege to have been born in this ancient land. In an ancient book, we read that the Buddha said, if he should be born again for the service of the world and were asked to choose the place of his re-birth, he should once again choose India. Europe lies bleeding today for its faith in force. Our victory is in bearing witness to India's vision.

AN ANCIENT INDIAN UNIVERSITY

INDIA has, for some time, been the battle-ground of Indian and Western world-views. And I have known critics, ignorant of Indian culture and of the deeper values of the culture of the West, scoffing at the Ideals of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, as abstractions, and putting the heel of pride upon the culture of the East. A great awakening has not yet come, but it *will* come. And first it will steal into the hearts of young men. It is necessary, therefore, that the younger generation should grow in an atmosphere of robust idealism, should appreciate the values of India's past, and understand the meaning of modern forces.

Let me consider with young India the significance of a great educational experiment begun about the first century before Christ. I refer to the Nalanda University founded by Sakraditya and described, as it was seven hundred years later, in the Chinese records of the eminent pilgrim-scholar, Hsuen-Tsang. At this hour, in India's history, when our thoughts are focussed on the problem of national reconstruction, we need to know that the current system of education, its organisation and machinery notwithstanding, needs a thorough over-hauling. And I believe profoundly that the spirit and ideals of ancient Aryan culture are needed today for the building up of our national life.

The Nalanda University was built in Bihar. It functioned for several centuries until, in the

seventh century, there broke in upon India a storm, the storm of a foreign invasion, and the University fell, overwhelmed by the storm. India had not the strength to resist the storm, India had not a *kshatrya* race to guard her : the *kshatrya* race had practically perished.

With what devotion was this University built,—built by great merchants and built by Kings! The Kings realised that while they were to help, their governments must not interfere with the course of culture. Six Kings helped the University. And the first of them was a lover of the poor : he served the orphan and the widow : he served the poor people, and he had reverence for men of knowledge.

The Nalanda University had a number of able teachers, professors of learning,—all scholars who were men of character. Look around you, today! Survey the situation in India! Think for a moment what our schools and colleges are striving for! Mere degrees! And my bewildered heart asks the question :—Where is character-building? My broken, beloved India stands urgently in need of men of character, heroic men, sacrificial men, men who would pour their lives as an offering in the great *yagna* of humanity.

Hsuen-Tsang gives us a refreshing account of what he saw at the Nalanda University. This Chinese Pilgrim was an eminent scholar. Tradition traced his descent from a Chinese Emperor. He translated as many as seventy-four volumes of the Indian books and showed conspicuous courage and self-control in his travels, specially on that memorable occasion when the river pirates

of the Ganges pursued him and a storm arose to save him.

When Hsuen-Tsang visits Nalanda, the head of the University was Shil Bhadra. He was a very learned man. He had wandered to different parts of India and, after many wanderings, had come to Nalanda. It was open to Shil Bhadra to be a Raja in East Bengal : but he realised that wisdom was richer than rubies, richer than silver and gold. And Shil Bhadra moved on in quest of knowledge until, at last, he came to Nalanda and there, one day, became the President of the great University.

The Chinese scholar, Hsuen Tsang, comes to Nalanda and in reverence bows down to Shil Bhadra. Then there takes place a conversation between Shil Bhadra and the Chinese scholar.

"For how many years have you been on the journey?" was the question put to him by Shil Bhadra. "Three years," was the answer of Hsuen-Tsang. And these three years this scholar had moved, from place to place, in quest of that knowledge which, he was told, would tell him of the laws of life,—the *dharma*. "I am come," he said to the President, "I am come from the country of China, desiring to learn the principles of the *Yoga-shastra*."

And *yoga*, synthesis, unity, was, doubtless, a prominent feature of Indian culture. The Nalanda University was, in itself, a synthesis, a self-sustained whole, a centre of the community's life in its various aspects,—economic, intellectual, spiritual. The Chinese traveller tells us there was a farm-house belonging to the University;

and, in another passage, we read that the University was supported by the revenues of about a hundred villages. The Nalanda University was a self-sustained colony, helping the development of agriculture and small industries.

The present-day distinction between vocational and liberal education is, to my mind, artificial : every scheme of education must be liberal and vocational. It must relate knowledge to life,—to the ideal values and to utilities of the natural and social world in which we find ourselves. At the Nalanda University, the professors and students not only studied and meditated: they did manual work. The economic factor was not disdained. Has it not been hallowed by some of the world's great seers? Christ was a carpenter : St. Paul was a tent-maker : Kabir was a weaver. And the teachers in the University did manual work and taught it to their pupils.

The University was an economic centre : it was a great intellectual centre, too. It had a hundred platforms for teaching, and members of the community rose to the number of ten thousand! Science was one of the subjects studied : the University had observatories. Says the Chinese record :—"The observatories seem to be lost in the vapours of the morning, and the upper rooms tower above the clouds." And among the subjects taught were logic, literature, arts, medicine, philosophy.

"The Great Vehicle,"—the Buddhist books,—were studied with special devotion. The University was built and developed by six Buddhist Kings in succession, "in loving obedience to Buddha."

The founders and builders were Buddhists, but the University was not denominational. Denominationalism, sectarianism, is the death of culture. True culture must appeal to the human. The University ideal is to awaken the spirit universal. And so the Vedas and *shastras* of the Brahmins were studied, side by side, with the Buddhist canon. What an example in religious harmony this,—to nations of the West! And we read that the teaching staff included "strangers"! Saraswati is international. Wisdom is not the monopoly of any one race. And there was nothing in the atmosphere of Nalanda University congenial to modern notions of race-superiority.

Karma, reverence, appreciation of the good in other lands and peoples, free pursuit of truth, meditation, and service of man, were the truths the teachers taught and which entered into their philosophy of life. *Karma* is justice. If but the nations could believe that justice is the law of the universe! Justice may appear to be slow in coming, but come it must,—sure as the sun rises in the East. Every nation carries within its actions and aspirations its own fate, its own future. Reverence was taught to pupils,—reverence not alone for elders but, also, for what is beneath us, for brother bird and brother beast. And the teaching was given, again and again, that one must sit at the feet, even of strangers, to learn of them *vidya* and arts. It was recognised that knowledge was international, and the man who was a scholar claimed all respect, no matter what his country or creed.

THE greeting given to Hseun-Tsang indicates the catholic vision of the Nalanda University. He was a stranger, but he was a scholar, and he must be received with the respect due to a scholar. Four men of distinguished position in the University, come out a long way off,—seven *yojanas*,—to meet him. He halts on the way at a village : and soon the four men are joined by two hundred teachers and "some thousand lay patrons" to escort him to the University. They carry standards, umbrellas, flowers and perfumes to do him honour. As he enters Nalanda, the whole University greets him. He is requested to take a "special seat by the side" of the President. The *ghanta* (bell) is sounded to announce to all that the Chinese scholar is come and that all "commodities are for his convenience in common with the rest." And an Upasaka and a Brahmin accompany him with a riding elephant. What a reception! What a recognition of the internationalism of culture!

Nor was the aesthetic life of man ignored in the Nalanda University. I believe profoundly in the value of aesthetic and spiritual forces in education. And we shall presently understand how ethics and aesthetics entered into the life of Nalanda and shaped to high, noble ends the energies and aspirations of the student-community. The current system of education in this country has awakened aggressive intellect and aroused ambitions. And nothing is sadder than to see intelligence stripped of moral obligations and those aesthetic impulses which find satisfaction in the joy of altruism. And so we come back to

the truth that the immaterial is the vital, that the ideal is the real, that the truly dynamic and transforming things are those of the spiritual order. Those were the things which, as we shall see, entered into the life of Nalanda. They were in the hearts of the teachers of Aryavarta. Are the teachers and the teaching dead? Are the songs and philosophy and lore of Krishna and Shankara and Buddha dead? Or do they still slumber in the nation's heart, making India still a *punya bhumi*, the hope of a new world-culture, the cradle of a new synthetic civilisation?

I believe that in the heart of Aryavarta was a love of the Beautiful. And homes of Indian culture,—the *ashramas*,—were situated in places made lovely by art and nature. In the narrow, garden-less schools of your cities, culture is mutilated, and the aesthetic life of students is trampled upon by the current educational system which asks them to cram, not to enter into the joy of life. The Nalanda University was in the heart of spaciousness, in an atmosphere of the Beautiful. The record of the Chinese pilgrim-scholar speaks of its "richly adorned towers," and "the fairy-like turrets, like hill-tops." "From the windows," it says, "one may see, every hour, the winds and the clouds produce new forms : and above the soaring eyes one may see the conjunctions of the sun and moon." There were, also, "the deep translucent ponds," bearing on the surface the blue lotus and the red-coloured *kanaki* flower: and over all was the shade of the Amra Grove! "The roofs," we read, "were covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades."

"These things," says the chronicle, "add to the beauty of the scene." Surrounded by such things, Nalanda stood to bless teachers and students and develop in them the impulse to worship and serve for beauty's sake.

The site of the University was full of the associations of nature and the Buddha's life. "For a *yojana* around this spot," we read, "the space is full of sacred trees." And here Hseun-Tsang "remained for eight or nine days to pay his worship at each spot successively." Such a site gave scope for outdoor life, for nature-communion, for fellowship with birds and beasts of the woods. It secured that correlation of the physical, intellectual and aesthetic powers which is essential to sound training.

We talk, today, of "education through recreation." We speak of the educational value of play. What we preach was practised in the Aryan educational institutions of old. And in several cases, I believe, our discoveries in the educational world are but a recovery of some long-lost solutions of our problems. Swimming, wrestling, shooting arrows, hill-and-mountain climbing were taught to India's students, and continued to be taught in several schools till recent times. I have often thought there was a soldier-spirit in the *ashramas* of Aryavarta,—the spirit willing to bear and suffer for the service of society.

Genius, some of Europe's thinkers would have us believe, is nigh to insanity. Genius, according to Indian thinkers, is sanity, is health. The spiritual man, as depicted in the ancient books,

is the healthy man. And students and teachers at Nalanda never sat to studies or entered the temple of worship without a physical preparation. Cleaning of the body, right regard for dress and diet, breathing exercises and periodical fasts were deemed essential to intellectual and aesthetic life.

The teachers recognised the value of the harmony of powers in the human system and were full of grace. And we are not surprised to read of those deputed to conduct Hseun-Tsang to the President as having "dignified carriage." The pupils had health and vitality : and they were simple. In a recent book*, giving an idea of university life at Copenhagen, we read that before the War, "a poor but industrious student could support himself on £50 a year, but that today he cannot live on less than £100 a year; and this Danish University costs much less than Oxford or Cambridge or Paris or Harvard or Yale"! It is interesting to note how simple was the life of students at Nalanda! Their requisites were four,—clothes, food, bedding, medicine. And these were given them free : there was no system of fees in that un-commercial age. Their diet consisted of fruits, nuts, rice, butter and milk.

It was difficult to find fault with the discipline of Nalanda. The Chinese record says that "during the seven hundred years since the foundation of the establishment, there has been no single case of guilty rebellion against the rules." And this,—may we not add?—was due to the fact that the discipline was one of *dharma*, not of the

* This was written in 1922.

rod. It was no soft sentimentalism Nalanda encouraged : the community lived a life of self-control and self-discipline,—of study, toil, and duty. But the mainspring of all this discipline was the inspiration of human fellowship in the service of the Ideal. There was comradeship among the teachers : and the pupil was often addressed as "son."

The motive of Nalanda culture was not money : the motive was service. Buddhism was a religion of service more even than of meditation. The earliest hospitals and asylums were opened by Buddhists under the inspiration of the life of the Prince, who renounced his palace to spend himself in the service of humanity. And the thought which coloured all teaching at this Buddhist University was that the highest thing is service.

Knowledge is power, taught Bacon. Knowledge is service, taught the sages of the East. Is not service better than power? The spirit which permeated the University was one of fellowship with the Buddha and Boddhisatvas. Allegiance to these mighty servants of humanity and to the aesthetic ideal were marks of this University. The spiritual, rightly understood, is not in conflict with the aesthetic. The beautiful is spiritual. And what more beautiful than to be altruistic, to serve society and worship the God in man?

The belief in *karma* and a series of lives after this life, also, helped Nalanda to realise the beauty of service. For, if the Law is just, and if death is not the end of all, then to hoard is to lose, to give is to keep, and he who spends himself in the service of others only finds himself enriched and

equipped with new powers on the other side.

Nalanda stood a witness to this truth. The very name "Nalanda" signified "service without intermission," "uninterrupted service."

"WHAT is knowledge?" was a question the Chinese scholar put to Shil Bhadra. "I have left China and have wandered in many parts of India. I am in quest of knowledge. Tell me, master, what is knowledge?"

Shil Bhadra was not only a great scholar. He was a saint, a man of pure life, of developed intuitions, a man of awakened *buddhi*, a man of wondrous will-power, a man filled with the true spirit of *seva*, service of humanity. Shil Bhadra says to him :—"My child, knowledge is perception of the principles or laws of life!"

Here is a *sutra* which some of us may treasure in our hearts. Knowledge is not babbling from books. Knowledge is not what we read in a parchment, a withered leaf. Knowledge is perception of the principles or laws of life.

Such men of knowledge are the piteous need of India in these agitated days,—men of knowledge, men of perception, men of developed intuitions, men who can see afar and can guide us aright.

What are the principles of knowledge? Five. And these are :—(1) the principle of fellowship; (2) the principle of reverence; (3) the principle of concentration or *dhyana*; (4) the principle of tolerance; and (5) the principle of compassion, sympathy, *seva* and *yagna*, service and sacrifice.

Do you wish to build universities in India? Then understand a little of the great legacy which is yours as children of India, as children of this ancient land. Great is your heritage : great is your inheritance.

The culture of ancient Greece and Rome gave a new awakening to the life of Europe. The ancient culture of Asia, the ancient culture of India, will awake the whole world to a new life. But where are they who would make a study of the ancient culture of the East, of the ancient culture of India?

How many of our graduates know or appreciate the songs and stories of ancient India? How many realise the beauty of their own national culture? We need the education that would enable us to enter into the rich spiritual heritage of our race. And modern life needs some of the beautiful things our leaders and teachers loved, lived for, and died for in the long ago. Therefore I ask young men to claim their national culture, to claim the songs and stories, the literature and arts, the traditions and ideals of India. They are the temples where the Soul of the race remembers itself. And in them still slumbers a sacred fire waiting for Young India to breathe into it the breath of reverent love and wake it into a flame of sacrifice to the Saviour of the nations.

WHAT INDIA NEEDS

It was a fine type of civilisation India developed in the long ago. Some think military organisation is the test of civilisation : and so, Western nations did not regard Japan as civilised till she defeated Russia! Some regard increased natural comfort as the test of civilisation : and the economic school has laid much stress on the accumulation of gold and silver. Some regard technical invention as the true test : it has yet to be known how far inventions have either added to the joy of living or contributed to our appreciation of those deeper values which make life worth living.

Modern politicians often appeal to the proportion of exports and imports, national debt, capital, territorial expansion, etc., as the true determinants of national progress. But material improvements are only means of gratifying desires; and to increase the needs or desires is not in itself a sign of progress. Unsatisfied desires are a stimulus only when kept within limits. Crossing the limits, they only create speculative thieves and political fanatics.

The industrial revolution has introduced new wants and desires. Has it introduced joy into life? Artificial wants have created over-production and under-consumption. And, after all, what is the end of social life? Is it money-making or soul-forming? Life is being lived, today, under great pressure, and there is a craving for

the sensational. Exciting plays and songs are in continual demand : cinemas are sought with enthusiasm : gambling and drunkenness are increasing. Industry and machinery are conspicuous today, but yearningly you ask :—"Where is the soul?"

It is just here that a study of the Hindu type of civilisation may be of service, today. The Hindu type is dominated by a socio-religious ideal. The Hindu interpreted life as communion with God, with man, and with nature. He interpreted life as communion, because he saw one Life, one Soul in all. Is not the highest stage of socialisation this,—to live and work as a member of the social whole, to find our ideal self in others? True it is, that all sin is separateness. As one of our scriptures has it :—"He who knoweth not the science of the Self, he makes no action fruitful." Again :—"Worship ye the Universal Self as the One and only Beloved.....For the sake of the Self alone is all else dear." The ancient Indian ideal is fellowship with nature and fellowship with man in and through the Eternal. Civilisation must develop a sense of fellowship or perish in its own entanglements.

The ancient Indian civilisation has been nourished by communion with nature. In the West, man has been compelled to wage war with nature. Man there has lived by wrestling with nature : and an eminent scientist spoke of man as "nature's rebel." Europe's civilisation had its origin in the commingling and conflict of men in the city. But Aryan civilisation was born in nature's lap. Our legislators lived in communion with nature.

The energy of the Hindu civilisation was not due to conflict. It was the energy of inwardness. The leaders of Hindu civilisation were not men of the battle-spirit, but foresters,—men who realised what it is to have power in repose.

Christian England received stimulus from the sea, Mahomedan Arabia from the desert, the Aryan India, very largely, from the forest. The Rishis who made India were foresters. Even in Indian folktales, the forest is magnified, not the palace. Janaka was not ashamed to plough, though his royal hand wielded the sovereign sceptre of the land.

This communion with nature did not make India inert : it enriched her consciousness. In Hindu dramas, you note the silent action of nature on man. Man, without the influence of nature, is represented as a rebel, as being subject to fits of passion. And with the Hindu poet, nature-love is not enjoyment but communion, not pleasure but *sadhana*, a spiritual discipline, a purification ceremony. A Bengali poem expresses this sentiment in touching terms. The poet addresses nature thus :—

O Mother Earth! Father Sky!
Brother Wind! Friend Light!
Beloved Water!
Here take my last salutation with folded hands!
For, today, I am melting away into the Supreme,
Because my heart became pure,
And all illusion vanished,
Through the power of your good company.

This socio-religious ideal of life secured freedom

of thought and expression,—a freedom unexampled in the history of the world. The pages of Aryan history are not stained with deeds of violence in the name of religion.

So it was the Aryan made *dharma* the basis of social value-judgments. The Hindu recognised the law of social solidarity. Aryan sociologists, like Manu and Yagnavalkya, discerned the truth that the conflict giving rise to economic problems and perplexities could be resolved, only if the essential forms, the categories of variation, namely desires, be controlled by *dharma* in the laws of social consciousness.

One of the laws emphasised by Aryan sociologists was progress in a series of sacrifices. The Darwinian formula of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is not the final word of life. Social expansion is through self-sacrifice : for the ultimate purposes of life are immaterial. Wealth is but a means, and poverty is neither a crime nor sin. India's great men were men of wisdom rather than of wealth : and Kalidasa sat on the side of the great King, Vikrama. The standard of the outer life was low, but that of the inner life was high : and great was the honour done to those who lived the inner life. Some of these men,—the *sanyasins* of *gnana*,—sat in India's legislative councils.

Such *sanyasins*,—practical *sanyasins*,—men who, having developed *abhedha buddhi*, can see into the principles of national life, and who know that wisdom, not money, is the measure of man,—such men, indeed, are the nation's need today.

DEMOCRACY IN ANCIENT INDIA

ANCIENT India believed in freedom of thought and freedom of conscience as, perhaps, no nation of the West. When did she witness wars of religion? And when did she persecute public opinion or send to the prison-house the men who would not think in terms of the official mind? India believed that the very birds and beasts had the right to live unharmed.

Ancient Aryavarta recognised only freemen,—freemen in the family, and freemen in the body politic. Caste degenerated into separateness, in later days. Caste, in the earlier days, was a grand experiment in national cooperation. The Aryan father did not, like the Roman, exercise despotic sway over family members : and the Aryan State, unlike Greek and Roman States, recognised no slave-labour.

The essence of the State, writes Trietschke, "consists in this, that it can suffer no higher power above itself." The essence of the State, according to the ancient Indian view, consisted just in this, that it recognised a higher Reason, a higher Will,—the *dharma*,—above itself. Not power, but expression of *dharma* was the end of the Aryan State. Not the ancient Indian, but the new European, developed a theory of state-absolutism, a theory of the god-state, frightful in power, responsible to none except itself!

The Aryan King shared the life of his people. He was required by the Law above him,—the

Aryan Law of the Land,—to be in sympathy with the needs and aspirations of his people. How else could he look after their interests? The King was to be "a father to his people." We read, in the books, of Kings willing to offer up themselves, "a sacrifice to save the people." And of one who failed to tread this path of *dharma*, we read in a Buddhist drama :—

A coward is that King!
He offers to his enemy,
The people of his realm!
Why did he not first offer up himself?

The King was to be the burden-bearer. "I will act according to *dharma*," he said in his coronation oath, "and I will not act arbitrarily." But if he acted foolishly or rashly or oppressed his subjects, the people were to "deprive him and his family of the kingdom." He could be fined or deposed by the State Council, which was representative of the people. His right to rule was derived from the original right of the people.

Strictly limited was monarchy in ancient India : the authority was not the King's word but the written order of the King-in-Council. So we read that "the King, who commands without writing, and the officer, who acts without written orders, are both thieves." Public opinion was not to be ignored or suppressed. Public opinion, says an ancient law-giver, "is more powerful than the King, as the rope made up of many fibers is strong enough to drag a lion!"

India evolved a noble conception of kingship. The King was to be a servant of the people.

"Work I must for the welfare of all," said Ashoka. And Chanakya gives us some idea of this work when he says :—"The King shall attend personally to the business of Gods, heretics, Brahmans learned in the Veda, cattle, sacred places, the aged, the afflicted, the helpless and women." "At all times and in all places," ordered Ashoka, "whether I am dining or in the ladies' apartment, in my bedroom or in any closet, or in my carriage or in the palace gardens, the official reporters should keep me constantly informed of the people's business, which business of the people I am ready to dispose of at any place." Public grievances could thus be heard and redressed quickly, and the chances minimised of the law's delay. The officials were to avoid idleness, impatience and harshness. Special efforts were put forth by government to promote agricultural improvement and economic interests of the people. "In their happiness," writes an ancient lawgiver, "lies the King's happiness."

The right divine of Kings to do wrong was never recognised by ancient lawgivers. Monarchy was constitutional. Above the King was the *dharma*, the Law of Aryavarta, the Law of the people, the Law of the social life which none was to violate. The King's rights were derived from this *dharma*, this right of the people. And in the *Aitareya Brahmana*, we read of the ceremony the King went through, when he received authority from the people's hands, and of the oath he took on that occasion, saying :—"May I be deprived of heaven, of life, and offspring, if I oppress you!" And there are names mentioned

in the books of Kings who were dethroned, because they violated the Law, the *dharma*.

In some parts of India, indeed, there were republics : and it was the republic of the Punjab, which helped Chandragupta to emancipate India from the yoke of Macedonians. Kingship rested on common consent of the people : and it was the King-in-Council that ruled the land. In addition to the Council, there were the popular Assemblies, which wielded great influence. And some of these Assemblies in the South, the Greek historian says, "greatly checked the power of Kings." There were village communities, each a unit of self-government : they appointed and controlled several officials corresponding to our Collectors and Deputy Collectors and Mukhtiarkars.

It is a fiction to say that India has believed in the one-man rule. The State Council was at the helm of the administration. The Council was presided over not by the King but by a Minister, called the Pradhana, and had direct control over the navy, the army, the finance, the police, justice and foreign affairs,—each one of these departments having a Minister of its own. In addition to this, there was the *Vidya Sabha* (Ministry of Education), to look after education, arts and architecture. There was also the *Dharma Sabha* to look after public health and social morality.

Then, there were Village Councils, each Council having a number of Committees. There was a Water Committee, which attended to the water-supply of the village and made arrange-

ments for irrigation works. There was a Garden Committee, which looked after public gardens and orchards : and travellers speak of the abundant supply of fruits and flowers. There was a Social Service Committee, which organised relief and opened institutions of charity and public utility. It was these Village Councils, the little Parliaments of the nation, which distributed village lands among the peasants and collected taxes, a portion of which was sent to the State Council.

Members of the Village Council were elected by the people : and the chosen head, the President, the *mukhi* of the Council, was held in high esteem by the Government. "Your Honour,"—thus did even the highest official of Government address him. And the respect paid to the village headman only increased the people's respect for Government. Today, the *mukhi* is overawed by petty officials of the administration. It cannot be well with a people that will not or cannot impress its will on the official class : and the official who thinks he can with impunity defy public opinion cannot be a servant of the nation. It was a wise rule in ancient India which compelled Government officers to live outside the village : and the Village Councils were left to manage their own affairs without official interference.

The *Sukraniti* says in clear, emphatic terms that in matters of dispute between the people and the officials, the King "should take the side not of his officials but of his subjects." And a good old rule declared that an official, accused by one hundred persons, was to be dismissed.

In other guilds and associations of the people, no less than in the village panchayat, was observed the same principle of national self-government. There were assemblies of artisans and traders : they tried cases of dispute between traders, and the Brotherhood issued orders of punishment or acquittal.

That these *Sabhas* or Councils were democratic will be easily understood by those who remember that members were elected : these, in their turn, elected their own representatives to the Nation's Council, the Raj Sabha, whose decision the King was bound to respect. And to read the books carefully is to understand how wise they were who based Government on this principle of election. Each village was divided into wards, and every candidate for election was to satisfy certain qualifications. He must possess a definite area of land, be educated, and be above 35 and below 70 in age. There was the further qualification of character, so that a man guilty of social immorality could not be a candidate for a seat in a Village Sabha.

Nor were women debarred from being members of the *Sabhas*. We read of a woman, in ancient India, who was a member of a Committee of Justice. And King Harsha's sister had no small part in the administration of Harsha's kingdom. Aryavarta recognised the principle of cooperation of the two sexes. Aryavarta gave a high place to woman in the economy of the nation's life. The woman-soul must pour its inspiration upon our life and civilisation, today. And I look for a woman-patriot, with a maiden's

passion for the Motherland, to arise and interpret the hidden heart of India to the world.

The energies of India were thus set free to evolve a great culture and secure well-being of the people. Trees were planted along public roads : *ashramas* were built for travellers : there were post-offices and police stations. The policeman was a servant of the people, not a spy of the official. The confidential agents of the King were, as the Greek historian has testified, men who spoke to him honestly of the people's grievances. With beautiful frankness does the *Sukraniti* say :— "A King worthy of praise should hear his own fault from his subjects' point of view, and get rid of them, but never punish the people."

The Aryan knew the science of irrigation, and special care was taken to regulate the supply of water. Rainfall in a particular year might be scanty, but famine of food was checked. Half the food grains in the State ware-houses were held in reserve for the next year : and it was the reserves which helped people in the famine year. The revenue system was not inflexible, as it is today : the land belonged to the people, and the peasant gave the King a share according to the produce.

I believe that the nations need the deeper values of Indian civilisation. And so I plead with young men to claim as their own the rich inheritance of the past. India loved freedom and built up democratic institutions in the morning of the world's history. Therefore, I bow to her. Therefore is sacred the very dust of India's earth. For the love of India is not a

sentiment "without form and void." The love of India is the love of India's earth and India's men, of her hills and rills, her vales and dales, her cottages, her holy hermitages, her living past flowing into the present. It is the love that comes from the Rishis and Manus, who stand behind us as the bulwarks of this ancient land.

India saw, in diverse ways, the truth of freedom : and on that she built a mighty civilisation. Therefore, I ask young men to think of her, to study her genius, to become a part of her passion, a part of the Indian Idea. Therefore, I plead with them to speak her mind, to feel the ache of her aspirations, to read the scripture of her soul, and to believe that they have the power to make India great,—aye, greater than she was even in the long ago.

ARYAN WISDOM

To understand the scriptures of Aryan wisdom is the understand India.

These scriptures may be classified thus :—

Class I :—(1) the Vedas; (2) the Brahmanas,—commentaries on the Vedas; (3) the Upanishads,—forest books enshrining the wisdom of the Rishis who lived in the forest a life of meditation and *tapasya* (self-discipline).

Class II :—(1) the *Ramayana*, an epic giving the moving story of Sri Rama; (2) the *Mahabharata*, also, an epic, describing the great struggle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Gita is a section of the *Mahabharata* : the Gita's philosophy is the inspiration of the epic, and the philosophy of the Gita is inspired by the idea that life to be dynamic should be a synthesis of action and meditation : action without meditation is blind : meditation without action is empty : and he truly acts who does his own duty, *swadharma*, renouncing all desire for "fruits" of action and surrendering all at the Lotus-feet of the Lord; (3) the *Manu Samhita*, the Code of Manu, the great law-giver; (4) the Puranas, one of them being the *Bhagavata*, which gives the moving story of Sri Krishna; and (5) Sant-bani, sayings of the great saints of India.

Of these, the oldest scripture is the *Rig Veda*. It has been rightly called the "world's oldest Bible." There are four Vedas in all, and their hymns, called the *mantras*, came to the singer-

sages, the Rishis, direct out of the heart of Reality. We talk, we argue : the Rishis were men of direct knowledge. They were seers of the spiritual realm. A mere scholar is not a Rishi. A Rishi is he whose inner faculties have been unfolded,—one whose "third eye" has been opened. Science is built on laws of nature : psychology is built on laws of mind : religion is, also, built on laws. And singers of the Vedas have been named Rishis, i. e., seers, because they saw the laws of the Spirit and civilisation. The Vedic *mantras* give us glimpses of these laws. The *mantras* are simple and profound,—simple in language, profound in thought. There is symbolism in the Vedas, not idolatry. Symbols are not idols.

Mantra after *mantra* is fragrant with aspiration to the Eternal. Here is one rendered into English :—

O Shining One!
Withdraw from us whatever evil is,
And call to us the good!

In yet another *mantra*, the Vedic Rishi says :—"Be steadfast in the Supreme Light!" It is the Light of the Spirit, the *Atman*. This Light shines in him who has developed the intuitive mind. And the intuitive is of a higher plane than the mental. The present is a cycle of the intellect turned, again and again, to destructive ends. But, I believe, a new cycle is coming. The new cycle will be a cycle of science illumined by the wisdom that builds : a cycle of unification, of synthesis.

THE very word "Veda" is significant. And in this connection, it is interesting to study the names of the world's great scriptures. The "Bible" means "books." The "Testament" means "covenant," "legal agreement"; and the Jewish consciousness did not, ordinarily, rise above the legal idea of religion. The Jewish scriptures are filled with the thought of a "legal agreement" between man and God. The "Qura'n" comes from *qura*, "to read," "to recite" : so that the word, literally, means "the reading." *Avesta* stands for "law." The "Zend Avesta" (the name of the Parsi scripture) means the "law explained."

The word "Veda" means "knowledge" or "science." Darwinian biology, according to many Western thinkers, has discredited religion : and the theology of the West has long been agitated over conflict between religion and science. The Aryan sage knew no such conflict. Religion is science,—the science of Life. This, to my mind, is the great note of Aryan wisdom. In his *Life of Jesus*, the author, Dr. Pipenbing, compares Christianity with other Eastern Faiths and says :— "Christianity is superior to all other religions, and the Bible is, by far, the best of sacred books." To not a few, the Bible as interpreted by many of the theologians of the West, is a scripture which makes religion no better than a set of dogmas. To the Vedic Rishi, religion is knowledge.

Ancient India explored Truth in many domains. The University of Vikrasila had a school of natural science. The Aryan astronomers recognised the attraction exerted by the earth upon material bodies. In literature, in mathe-

matics, in medicine, in art and astronomy, the Hindus were great. But they were pre-eminently great in the science of Life. The Hindu Rishis were not hermits. Many of them mingled with men. Most of the Rishis were good householders. Some were counsellors of Kings and members of the State Assembly. This knowledge did the Rishis proclaim to the people :—"*Satyam gnyanam anantam!*" "The Supreme One is Truth and Knowledge Infinite!"

To know is to pass from form to function and thence to what Western thinkers call "notion or inner meaning." The Rishis use the word *Atman*. And real knowledge is not attained until, passing from form and function, we become conscious of the *Atman*. Knowledge is *Atman*-consciousness.

Again and again, is the note sounded that God is one, that He is our Father, that in Him is the strength of man and the healing of the nations :—

> Him we invoke who reigns supreme, the Lord of all that moves or stands, Inspirer of the Soul.
>
> In the beginning was God, the Source of Light. He is the One Lord of all. He upholds the Earth and the Heavens. To Him we offer oblations.
>
> He who, by His greatness, is the One Sovereign King of all that moves and breathes and slumbers,—He who is the ruler of all bipeds and quadrupeds, to Him we offer oblations.

I wonder if, in the wide range of literature, there are passages more sublime in aspiration, more profound in mystical insight, more wonder-

ful in spiritual grandeur.

The Vedic singers were sons of Light,—men who had intuition of the Unseen. This intuition must the modern age recover if it is to solve its problems. Life has its fruition and fulfilment in and through communion with the Spirit. Much of the failure of modern life is due to its absorption in the transient, its forgetfulness of the One-in all.

THE Hindu faith, based on Aryan wisdom, is not fetichism, nor polytheism, nor idolatry. The Hindu faith is full of symbols. For the Great Mystery is nameless. God defined is God denied! The Nameless One may only be "named" by symbols. India's philosophy, literature, educational systems, and social life were, in the long ago, organised on the basis of this intuition of the One Life in all. This Vision of the One, at once Immanent and Transcendent, made India truly great among the nations.

Scholars came from China to India as to a holy land. Thinkers and mystics from Greece came to pay homage to her as to the Guru among the nations. India stood upon heights of culture and civilisation. The Pythagorean Brotherhood assimilated some of the disciplines of Brahmnical and Buddhist orders. India was great, for India stood for supremacy of the soul.

Veda is knowledge: and the Vedas make knowledge the basis of life. The desire for knowledge, indeed, is one of the creative forces in the life of humanity. Civilisation can make no advance

without knowledge.

But what is knowledge? According to the Vedic Rishi, knowledge is an energy, a *shakti* of the *Atman* (Spirit). Religion can have little value if it cannot be presented as a science of Life. Not merely a science of nature. Darwin's discovery has a great value. And the social science, the "new science," as some call it, is, also, a very valuable study. But neither nature nor society may, I humbly submit, be properly understood without a knowledge of the Spirit. The Rishis of India, like the great mystics and sages of Europe, speak to us of the science of the Spirit.

And this knowledge of the Vedic Rishi is essentially related to life. Out of this vision of the One Divine Self in all grows the thought of fellowship with the poor. The greatest in Indian history, from the days of Sri Rama downwards, have been those who have loved and served the poor. Sri Rama ate berries in the broken cottage of Shabri. Sri Krishna loved to be called "friend of the poor." Sri Buddha renounced the palace and joined the brotherhood of the poor. Sri Chaitanya, a Brahmin-scholar, broke the rules of caste and rejoiced in the company of the poor.

Today, alas! the ancient ideal of the Vedic Rishis is much neglected in practice. We say we are proud of the Rishis. Are the Rishis proud of us? The Indian problem is, essentially, one of *shakti*, vitality. And *shakti* is not dead: it lies locked up, imprisoned. And the key to unlock it is,—fellowship with the poor.

In a Vedic *mantra*, we read :—"God is One : He hath no caste." The Vedic thought, the

Aryan wisdom is inspired by this cosmic vision. The nations and the races need this message. All over the world, alas! there is hate, today. We need to think in terms of divine humanity.

THE word "Aryan" means, literally, "noble." The Aryan people of ancient India had the inspiration of the idea that they belonged to a "noble race." It was a race so radiant, so rich in the wealth of mind and spirit. The Vedic hymns reveal the reverence the Aryan race had for woman and family and fire! *Agni* (fire) was a symbol of life.

Much did the Aryans achieve in different departments of thought and life. Not many know that the Aryans invented numerical signs including the zero and the decimal system. The great Muslim, Alberuni, acknowledged that the Arabs were indebted to the Hindus : and it was a Hindu scientific mission from India which introduced numerals in the court of King Mansur. Werner pointed out that the Chinese owed their decimal system to India. There were Hindu astronomers whose renown spread to far-off countries.

Long before Greece or Rome rose to greatness, India was the leader of civilisation. And in the day of her greatness, India's knowledge was inspired by a cosmic vision. The Aryan saw the Divine Face in the universe. The Aryan Rishi had a vision of the truth that "above the gods" was "the Great God, the All-Father." The Rishi spoke of the "All-Father" as the "*Dyaus-Piter*" which, literally, means "The Shining

Father," "the Radiant Father." Shining, radiant, for He lives in Light, He is Light! In hymn after hymn, does the Rishi lift up his heart in aspiration and adoration to the Radiant All-Father!

If we stand or walk, the Great Lord sees, as if near!
He knows what two whisper together!
Whenever we break Thy Law through thoughtlessness, have mercy,
Almighty, have mercy!
Preserve us by knowledge from sin, and lift us up for our work and our life!

Only the strong and free shall remain,—said Darwin. And the "noble race," the Aryan people, built up a civilisation of *shakti* (vitality), a civilisation of strength and freedom. But the Aryan strength and Aryan freedom lifted up, not trampled upon, the weak. The Aryan Rishi saw in all the One *Atman* : this word means, literally, "breath," the breath of Life.

There is deep unrest, today, among the nations,—deep unrest, despair! Civilisation is sinking : its very bases are broken : its superstructure is tottering, today. It is high time to sit to the task of re-valuation of values.

Therefore, I ask for a new study of the Aryan wisdom,—the wisdom of the Rishis. Therefore, I plead with the youths of different nations to reflect on the ancient message :—"He is One : He hath no caste!" All communities, all countries, all nations, all races belong to Him. And in Him is the peace of the peoples.

THE UPANISHADS AND THE MODERN MAN

I WISH to regard the Upanishads from the point of view not of theology but of literature. A careful study of these ancient books will indicate that they are a contribution to world-literature.

There are a few collections which we may regard as the great literary scriptures of the world, which are not of local or provincial interest, but have a universal value.

One of these collections expresses the Hellenic genius. Greek classics articulate an ideal concerning the civic spirit sounding, again and again, the note that the duty of the individual is to subordinate himself to his nation-state.

Another collection is the Hebrew Bible charged with the idea that the universe is fundamentally righteous.

Another great literary scripture is the *Qura'n*,—a book whose literary beauty and grace made a powerful appeal to the people of Arabia. Sovereignty of God and democracy of believers are the two great ideas beautifully set forth in the *Qura'n*. The Prophet was an artist, and his exposition of these two ideas is well-worth a study by the modern man.

Another great literary scripture is Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

THE Upanishads have a place in the world's great literary scriptures. Not without reason

have the Upanishads fascinated men in different countries and at different times. One of them was Dara, the brilliant Moghul Prince. He was the eldest son of the Moghul Emperor, Shah Jehan. From Akbar, his grandfather, Dara inherited a taste for spiritual matters. Dara came, too, under the influence of Sufi poets and fakirs. He saw the harmony of Islam and the Hindu faith. He was entitled to the Moghul throne : but his younger brother, Aurangzeb, slew Dara and changed the course of Indian history.

Akbar's dream and Dara's hope of reconciliation between the two great faiths of the Moghul Empire,—Islam and Hinduism,—perished. And India is still a battle-ground of creeds and forms of faith. Dara was a lover of Hindu literature and Hindu philosophy. At Dara's court lived Jagannath Pandita, a famous singer of Sanskrit lyrics. Dara was a scholarly and broad-minded Prince. He brought together a few renowned scholars to translate the Upanishads into Persian.

Latin and German translations followed of the Upanishads. Schopenhauer, the great German thinker, was fond of the Upanishads : the German philosophical world was influenced by them. Some developments of Neo-German Idealism were due, unfortunately, to a perversion of the Upanishadic doctrine of Will of Man. Whereas the Upanishads ask us to develop our will and the power of thought to use them in the service of the universe, some neo-idealists of Germany clamoured for the will-to-power, the will-to-dominate, and Europe was plunged into a terrific world-war.

What is the meaning of the word "Upanishad"? The word may be interpreted in more than one way. Radically, the word means "sitting down near." We are thus taken to the far-off times when education demanded no elaborate external machinery, no costly buildings, when the big classes of today were unknown and the pupils "sat near the teacher," "sat down round" him, in fellowship with the *guru*, sat on the ground in nature's lap, receiving lectures not in closed doors, as today, but in the open air, and growing physically, morally, spiritually, through daily communion with the sages and Rishis and with nature's wonder and beauty.

The word "Upanishad" radically means, also, "what destroys,"—prejudice and ignorance,—conveying thus the idea that he who seeks knowledge must rise above prejudice and secure a catholic outlook on life. So it was that the Hindu scholars rejoiced to sit at the feet of the Greeks to learn astronomy and moved out to enrich their minds with the knowledge and experiences of the non-Aryan.

The total number of Upanishads is, according to one estimate, 1180. Of these, 108, we are told, have survived the shock of centuries and have been translated into more than one language. Some tell us, wrongly I submit, that the Upanishads are infected with asceticism and other-worldism, and that they have, at best, only a speculative, theoretic interest. It is true, there are in the Upanishads many things of speculative interest. Again, there are in these ancient books matters bearing upon the psychology of

the sub-conscious,—a matter not of speculative interest but of deep practical value. In these ancient books, too, I admit, there are passages which are to me, at present, enigmatic. But the books, viewed as a whole, are charged, through and through, with a message which is fundamentally practical and is, I believe, of vital value to the modern man. Those who talk of the other-worldism of the Upanishads forget that many of the Rishis who composed them were house-holders,—men rich in practical wisdom. The Rishis were practical idealists : and they taught their pupils not as arm-chair academicians but as seers of the secret of life.

The teaching embodied in these books was given to students,—the majority of whom were, in due course, to become householders themselves. The great ones who gave the teaching enshrined in the Upanishads were men who realised the developmental character of society and civilisation. Life is, in these books, represented as a growing tree, anticipating thus what we call, today, the "organic conception of society."

THE Upanishads have, I submit, a message for the modern mind. They speak of the laws of life. Four of them,—the four fundamental laws of life, as I call them,—have a special value for the youths of India. They must learn to live a life of obedience to these laws if, indeed, India is to fulfil the obligations imposed upon her by destiny to help the modern movement of culture and civilisation.

One of these laws is the Law of Veracity. Our public life will assuredly be poor in the measure in which it tramples on truth and purity. Our civilisation, alas! is full of conventional lies. We often forget that we live in a glass-house : and the world has a knack of finding us out in the long run. I ask young men to worship the Truth that is God, in the teeth of the world's opposition : and though they be poor, their word will be honoured and their influence will not pass away. The Rishis in ancient India taught the students to bear witness to truth, unafraid of the world.

ANOTHER law the Upanishads affirm is the Law of *Dharma*. To do one's *dharma* is to be Brahman-like. What is Brahman? The answer given in the Upanishads is :—Brahman (God) is *Ananda* (the spirit of Joy). God is Joy, Love-Joy; and our *dharma* is to communicate joy to those we meet. Look around you! Look into your homes, your schools and colleges, your shops and temples! Examine your activities and organisations! Do you see therein the spirit of joy? Look at the intellectual faces of your students : do they feel the joy of knowledge? If not, give them teachers of the true type,—men of scholarship and sympathy and idealism,—teachers who will not be mere officials, but who will press their pupils to their hearts and know that, in blessing their students, they themselves are blessed. Look at your streets and see the labourers,—homeless, comfortless, sometimes breadless : are they happy?

Look into your homes invaded by cruel customs, into your temples, once the centres of spiritual life : do you see joy dwelling therein? Examine the condition of peasants and of India's masses : are they happy?

THE third great law is the Law of Race-solidarity. When the pupil, in ancient India, finished his course of studies, he came to the teacher, the Guru, for blessings and advice. And the Guru, in his parting message, said to the student about to enter the world :—"See that the thread of your race is not broken." Patriot-poets they were,—the singers of the Upanishads,—and they had a profound perception of this Law of Race-solidarity.

Emphasis is laid on body-building in the Upanishads. It is wrong to say the Upanishads ignore or despise the material basis of life. The body, the *sthula sarira* is, in these books, regarded as a mystic temple of the Highest. So it was that every student had to take the vow of *brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* is purity, is control of the senses, is reverence for the body.

Uddalika was one of the great and gifted Rishis of whom we read in the Upanishads. He had a son who was named Swetaketu. Rishi Uddalika very much wished to see his son grow in the beauty and strength of dedicated life,—the life dedicated to the Spirit. The very first lesson the Rishi gave to his son was :—"Swetaketu! maintain *brahmacharya!*" Be pure, was the Rishis's word to Swetaketu. Make your body a temple of

the Spirit!

Blessed is he whose body becomes a "temple" : it is not dominated by passions : it is radiant with light.

"Be not dominated by passion! Be radiant with light!" was the teaching of the ancient Rishi. Two passions, specially, must be combated and conquered. The first is impurity : the second is anger. Both these passions are flames. O child of India, be thou filled with light!

India cannot be truly great if Indians squander their *bala* or bodily vigour. Religion must build up strength. Don't squander your life-force! Develop your vigour and use it in the service of man. So may you be as the light gay grass, humble yet strong. So purified, you may see the beauty of nature and the truth of God.

Emphasis is laid in the Upanishads on nature-communion. "Hearken to the soul of nature!" said the great Zoroaster. So sang, also, the Rishis of the Upanishads. They had faith in nature more than in machinery. They believed in the value of silence-periods. Our bodies and minds are in the midst of disturbing influences. We must realise that there is strength in silence, that in silence-periods may be heard the voices of nature. Such periods of communion with the wonder of nature train our wills and prepare us for real service of the nation. Great thoughts, great ideas, great resolves are born, not in the noises and tumults of life, but in silent fellowship with the secret of nature.

THE fourth great law of life discerned by the Upanishads is the Law of Self-renunciation. "Rejoice in the Lord through self-renunciation!" is the teaching of the Upanishads. The world, according to the singers of the Upanishads, is an act of God's sacrifice. The universe is God's self-offering of joy. And, over and over again, is the teaching given concerning the joy of giving, the joy of sacrifice.

There is the message of the Upanishads for every one of us who would have his share in the struggles and strivings of today. India is, in the ancient books, called "Bharatavarsha." And one meaning of the word "Bharata" is "that which supports." India has supported us, supported the Hindu and the Mussalman, the Parsi and the Christian. As century has followed century, the Mother has supported some of the great civilisations of the world. The great human civilisations,—the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Greek, the Chinese, the Hindu, the German,—have been influenced by India. And in these days of the world's clash and conflict, India may yet support civilisations. But on the one condition that we, the children of this ancient land, endeavour to live a life of self-renunciation.

There is a touching little story of a pupil who, after a good deal of study and practice in the art of singing, comes to his music-master and sings in his presence and waits for the master's verdict. "You sing well," says the master; "but you will never sing divinely, until you have offered your all on the altar of love." So spoke the master to his pupil : and the words whisper a message

to us today.

Young men come and tell me :—"We have no great talents : we have not the world's treasure with us : we are poor, unknown : what can we give?" And to them I say :—Why call yourselves poor? Are you not sons of the Eternal? Princes are ye all. Why, then, regard yourselves as weak? The world's treasure,—silver and gold, possessions and titles and pomp and shows and power and dominion,—not these the need of the nation, the need of the world. You have what India wants,—your aspirations, your love and service. Offer these! Offer your all, howsoever little,—on the altar of love.

Remember, India is in quest of broken, suffering hearts. Let your hearts break for India,—break in music, the speechless music of service. Let your *dharma* be,—the service of India, the service of the Mother. Let your hearts break for India, and the Eternal Wonder-worker will come and re-set the strings of your heart. And you may hear the Secret whispered by leaves and flowers and stars! And you may sound new notes of a new song such as may stir the very stones of India.

WHY INDIA LIVES*

As I see the world sinking into savagery, I ask myself the question :—"Who will avert the impending tragedy?"

Broken and bleeding lies modern civilisation. Commerce is developing : wealth is being accumulated : technical education and scientific research are receiving more and more encouragement.

Not in these, but in the Rishi-ideals of ancient India, lies the hope of the Nations.

* * *

India, I humbly submit, will not follow Europe's way. India's place in the great family of the nations will be determined by the measure of her loyalty to her spiritual idealism, her witness to the divinity of man, her wealth of the wisdom of life.

India's leadership will not be of money and exploitation. Her leadership will be of service and spiritual idealism.

* * *

India has a genius, an individuality, a soul of her own. To that must she be true if she would re-arise and go again upon her great mission.

* * *

In India have been brought together the various religions of the world. May it be the privilege of India to initiate a co-operative movement in religions! May India build Temples with diverse wings for diverse religions! It will be a

* Excerpts from Sri T. L. Vaswani's writings and utterances.

blessed day when they all co-operate at once in the worship of God and the service of Man!

* * *

Rome that dreamt the dream of dominion and conquest, Rome whose eagles floated over far-off nations, Rome is gone : but India lives on!

Greece, the shrine of art and music, Greece, the cradle of culture and philosophy, Greece is gone : but India lives on!

"Egypt and Babylonia, Assyria and Phoenicia are gone : but India lives on!

* * *

If, in the midst of much that is disappointing in our life, I cling to this ancient soil with reverent hands and kiss its very dust as something consecrate, it is because I believe the spirit of our Heroes is not dead, but only awaits our sacrifice to lift India again to the heights where dwells Liberty,—our Love.

* * *

Once India lived. Her life was in communion with the Eternal.

Today, she wanders in unrest. She lives not, except in memory of what once she was but is no more.

She will live, again, in the day she will verify and enrich her vision of the Spirit in the New Age.

Her world-mission, in the coming days, is to reveal the synthesis of freedom and spirituality. To be truly spiritual is to be truly free. For spirituality is inner liberation : and out of the inner are the issues of outer life.

NEWS AND NOTES

By A "PILGRIM"

Beloved Dādā's Birthday :—Beloved Dada's (Sri T. L. Vaswani's) 91st birthday (25th November, 1970) will be celebrated with enthusiasm at Poona and a number of places in India and outside.

A six-day programme has been arranged for the celebrations at Poona. The programme includes *Ratha Yatra* (procession of pilgrims following the *Ratha*, the chariot, containing Beloved Dada's life-size statue); *Akhand Pat*; (continuous, unbroken recitation) of *Guru Granth Sahibh Dādā Lilā* (moving scenes from the life of Beloved Dada on the stage) *Yagna*; Distribution of cloth, etc., among the poor and needy; *Langar* (fellowship meals where about 5,000 people are expected to join); and a public meeting at which tributes will be paid to Beloved Dada and a Purse will be dedicated to him for the good work that is being carried on at Poona under his ever-living guidance and inspiration.

Nuri Granth :—Beloved Dada's *bāni*, comprising thousands of his songs in Sindhi, have been compiled together and will be issued in the form of a *Granth* (one volume), on the occasion of his 91st birthday. The *Granth*, which is being beautifully printed in two colours, is expected to run into 1100 pages (quarto demy size).

Beloved Dada's songs are the bread of life to thousands of his countrymen, who, today, are scattered in all parts of India and other countries of the world. The songs are rich in beauty, thought and aspiration. When listened to, in a receptive mood, they move many to tears. Every one of the songs is charged with the purest love of God : and love is self-surrender. Here is one of the songs in broken English translation :—

Myself I offer, Lord! to Thee!
I cast this little self from me
And stand before Thee here
And say :—"*Speak! Thy servant heareth!*"

In Thy holy presence
"*I*" *and* "*mine*" *no longer live!*

The "I" is dead ;
And Thou alone dost occupy
The jewelled throne of my Heart!

May the *Granth* bless every Sindhi home! It is regarded by many as a Scripture for the New Age.

The *Nuri Granth* may be had from "The Sant Mala Publications," 10, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona--1.

Dadaji's Statue :—At the entrance to the city of Poona stands Beloved Dadaji's statue,—a source of inspiration and blessing to hundreds of passers-by.

The pedestal on which the statue stands had been built in marble and has four granite tablets on which Beloved Dada's "sayings" have been carved in gold letters, in four languages. The front tablet carries the following quotation of Beloved Dada :—"Children of the Earth, ye all are one!" The other three tablets carry Beloved Dada's messages in Hindi, Marathi and Sindhi :— (गरीबों की सेवा है प्रभु की पूजा) "Service of the poor is worship of God!" (तुम्हाला सुख हवे का, मग सर्वांना सुखी करा) "Do you want to be happy? Then make others happy!" (ऐ दिल न कर फ़िकुर ! कर शुकुर? कर शुकुर !) "Be not grieved, O my soul! But in all situations rejoice and give gratitude to God!"

The pedestal stands in a circle where a small, beautiful garden has been planted.

Referring to this, Prof. V. K. Nulkar, Vice-Principal, N. Wadia College of Commerce, Poona, writes in a letter :—

"Allow me to say that the statue of Punya-Shloka Sadhu Vaswaniji looks beautiful,—and splendid ! The grand figure of Sadhuji stands there, facing the ancient land of Sind, the birthplace of ancient Indian civilisation.

"Sadhuji's finger points to the sky and I interpret this as though he is reminding us that "He is one and the Supreme!" as though Sadhuji is emphasising the essential unity of all religions. His sayings engraved on the pedestal are also extremely elevating....

"I always feel that if at all we should have statues, they should be of such great men who, by their life's mission, have tried to elevate the humanity. I am here reminded of the city of Hydelburg in Australia, where they put statues not of politicians but of philosophers."

Dear Shanti : An Angel of God:—Shri K. Ramachandra, the gifted editor of *The Religious Digest* of Ceylon, writes

the following in the course of a letter :—

"We were shocked and stunned to read the sad news relating to the untimely and sudden passing away of the Angel of your Centre, Shanti Devi.

"She has gone back to her proper Abode, at the feet of her Beloved Dadaji, who was her Guru and God. I got the news only after my return from Europe, and I have managed to get the enclosed tribute included in our current Digest, MSS. for which were passed when I was away in Switzerland and Germany.

"Her death has really created a vacuum and a void in your Centre, but I am sure her Spirit will guide you all."

Shri Ramachandra is an author of several books. He has visited many countries of the world, has worshipped in many shrines, and has represented Ceylon at several Religious and other International conferences. Pure in life and rich in aspirations, his heart aspires to live in unbroken communion with the Eternal. His words will be treasured by many of us here.

At the Lotus-feet of Dadaji :—The following tribute to dear Shanti appears in the *Religious Digest* of Oct., 1970 :—

"Sister Shanti has soared high to meet her Guru and God. She was only 51 years old when she passed away. Her life was one of dedicated service to the Life and Mission of Sadhu T. L. Vaswani, popularly known as Dadaji, from the tender age of ten.

"She moved about in our midst like an Angel, and died like a Saint, after blessing a newly wedded couple and two young men who were flying on the following day to foreign lands. Her parting advice to them was :—"Remember the Saints and their teaching, and set apart a portion of your earnings for the service of the poor and you will be richly blessed.

"In her untimely death, the Mira Organisation established at Poona by revered Vaswani has lost one of its important pillars. It has many institutions, and she was in charge of the Jeeva Daya Department, which served the needs of the poor, the forlorn and destitute; she was a sister to the birds and a helper of animals.

"Her activities were not confined to the above Section. She followed her Guru like his shadow, in his daily work, and even in his walks. She read for him the letters received from his devotees all over the world, and noted down his

answers for them. On the day we visited him, seven years ago, for the first and last time, she stood behind him, clad in snow-white cotton garment from neck to ankle, watching him writing a Message for us. Her divine face, with its sweet smile of spiritual glow, is ever fresh in our mind.

"In his tribute to her memory, Rev. Father Elinjimittam of Bombay writes in his beautiful poetic language :—

'As an angel you came into this earth :
Untouched, unspotted, unblemished by worldly contagion,
You stood steadfast, persevering to the end,
In that vocation from Heaven to remain for ever.
Cherubin-like, the virgin daughter of God.'

"We heartily endorse every letter of this tribute from a revered and saintly priest. He was privileged to meet her twice in the earthly pilgrimage.

"She had no fear of death. Like St. Francis of Assisi, she spoke of it as an intimate friend. Since the transition of Dadaji, her Guru and God, her heart was not here. In fact, she was longing for it in order to serve him in the Kingdom of Heaven. She has thus reached the lotus-feet of Dadaji, and there is no need for any one to cry and weep over her departure. Her spirit is sure to guide and help the inmates of the Mira Institute like its Founder's.

Pilgrimages to the Poor :—In connection with the *Dada Yagna* and *Shanti Yagna*, sisters and brothers of the "Brotherhood" move out, at least twice a month, to visit the sick in hospitals and the poor in orphanages or Disabled Childrens' Home or Home for the Aged or the Kondva Leprosy Hospital. They take with themseleves toys and sweets and fruits for children and eatables and napkins and blankets, etc., for the grown-ups. They distribute these among the poor : they meet them in love. And not unoften the eyes of the inmates of the Homes are touched with tears.

Recently, a visit was paid to the Home for the Aged, and it was found that the old men and women,—some of them too weak to move,—had to sleep on hard wooden boards. Forty-five mattresses were distributed among them. The entire cost (Rs. 1250/-) was contributed by a sister, Kumari Parvati K. Moorjani, in sacred memory of her dear departed mother, Smt. Kewalram Moorjani. Blessings of God be on the dear, departed soul !

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